

young woman recounted the fatal stabbing of her boyfriend on school grounds. She spoke with the deceased young man's mother sitting close by her side.

These are stories that we in Congress must hear and keep with us as we sort out our legislative options.

Madam Speaker, it is time for us to start listening to the students. Their insight can help us to understand the roots of today's violence and what we can do to help them stop it. I am so pleased that I will be able to welcome Cheyrl Villapania from El Puente High School in Santa Barbara, Stacie Pollock from Righetti High School in Santa Maria, and Brandon Tuman from Arroyo Grande High School in San Luis Obispo County. They are going to travel across the country next week to attend our conference, and I also commend their chaperone, Raquel Lopez, from Girls Incorporated in Santa Barbara. These capable young people will be the eyes and ears of our Youth Advisory Council here in Washington D.C. They will bring the concerns of the young people from the 22nd District of California to the conference and then report back to our youth and to our community on what they have accomplished. I am proud of them for taking the initiative, for making their voices heard on issues that are important to them, important to us all.

As important as our work here is in the capital, we know that the real work of reducing violence that surrounds our young people is going to come from within the communities themselves. Voices Against Violence conference is an excellent step in the right direction. I commend the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT) and his staff for their leadership in organizing this conference. I look forward to welcoming to the capital next week students from the central coast of California and from around the country.

HATE CRIMES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of the Hate Crime Prevention Act, and I strongly urge the Commerce-State-Justice conferees to include this important legislation in their conference report.

Since I was first elected to Congress, I have been focusing on the issues of livable communities, how we can create better partnerships between the Federal Government, State and local governments, private business and individual citizens to make our communities more livable. This means, in sum, communities that are safe, healthy and economically secure. If people are not safe from discrimination, the community is definitely not livable.

I have been a strong supporter of anti-discrimination efforts throughout

my public service career. As a member of the Oregon State House of Representatives way back in 1973 I had an eye opening experience when I had the opportunity to chair the legislature's first hearing on the issue of gay rights. The Hate Crimes Prevention Act is an excellent opportunity for the Federal Government to continue a trend over the last 50 years of moving aggressively to deal with issues of anti-discrimination.

Since 1969, the Federal Government has had the ability to prosecute hate crimes if that crime was motivated by bias based on race, religion, national origin or color and if that victim was attempting to exercise a federally protected right. The law has, in fact, proven to be a valuable tool in the fight against hate crimes, but unfortunately these hate crimes are still a part of the American landscape, and sometimes the language of the current federal statute is simply too narrowly drawn. The Hate Crimes Prevention Act would make a critical amendment to the law, removing the requirement that the activity be, quote, federally protected and adds sexual orientation, gender and disability as covered categories.

As I said, there are still hate crimes among us. In 1997 there were over 8,000 that were reported.

I have had the opportunity to witness firsthand that there are real faces attached to those statistics. One of the most searing experiences in our community occurred about 10 years ago when three Ethiopian immigrants were attacked in my hometown of Portland, Oregon, one beaten to death solely because of the color of their skin. I think our hearts all went out to the families of the victims, but there were more victims than the immediate family.

Sadly I was acquainted with a family of one of the people, the skin heads, who were convicted of that murder, a young man who will spend the rest of his life behind bars, tearing up his family, and indeed the whole community was touched with the awful knowledge that something of that nature could occur in our midst.

If we can send clear signals that hate crimes are not acceptable, we can do more than just convict those who are guilty. If with these strong signals we can prevent these horrible crimes from happening in the first place, we will be making our communities more livable.

I hope that my colleagues will join in the cosponsorship of the Hate Crime Prevention Act and that they will all prevail upon the conferees of Commerce-State-Justice to move this important process forward by including the legislation in the conference report.

GOOD NEWS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Madam Speaker, I want to share with my colleagues and

those who are watching in their offices some incredibly good news that appeared yesterday in many newspapers around the country, USA Today, many of the national newspapers. I know the St. Paul Pioneer Press back in my State carried the story, but it is incredibly good news, and I would like to read just the first paragraph or so.

It says something symbolically enormous may have happened today. The Congressional Budget Office announced that the government may have balanced the budget in fiscal year 1999. Now that is the one we just completed October 1 without spending Social Security money.

□ 1845

It goes on to say, if so, it would be the first time that that has happened since 1960 when Dwight Eisenhower was President, gentlemen sported fedoras, and women wore fox stoles.

Madam Speaker, this is incredibly good news for all generations. In fact, there were some other things that happened. To put this in perspective, the last time the Federal Government actually balanced the budget without using the Social Security trust funds, Elvis was just getting out of the army and going back to recording. The television show Bonanza was just going on the air. Apples sold for 18 cents a pound. The French company introduced the Renault Dalphine to the American market for about \$1,400 per automobile. The minimum wage was \$1, and some may even remember that Bill Mazerowski hit a home run in the bottom of the ninth to power the Pittsburgh Pirates to a world series win over the New York Yankees. I might add, and this is what really got my attention, the last time that the Congress and the Federal Government balanced the budget without using Social Security Trust Fund money, the last time that happened was 11 years before Congressman Paul Ryan was born. That really puts this into perspective. This has been a long time. In fact, I would like to say that we have been wandering in the wilderness of growing deficits for 40 years and finally, we have crossed the River Jordan, and I hope that we will not turn back.

Let me just show my colleagues another chart. This is what the Congressional Budget Office told us when I came here just five years ago in 1995. I was elected in 1994. But what they were saying was that in 1994, the Congress borrowed \$57 billion from the Social Security Trust Fund, and then it went to \$69 billion and then to \$73 billion and then to \$78 billion, and they were projecting that had the Congress had not gotten serious about controlling the growth in Federal spending and actually balancing the budget, they were projecting by this year we would be borrowing at least \$90 billion from the Social Security trust fund. Again I say, this is good news.

Now, we are in a great budget debate right now with the White House in